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*Brief of Points and Proofs in regard
to the proposed appropriation to en-
able the President to procure the
surrender of the Patent issued to
Dr. W. T. G. Morton, for the dis-
covery of the anæsthetic properties of
sulphuric ether.*

*Report of the Select Committee of the
House of Representatives, 32d Con-
gress.*



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As a remonstrance against the appropriation to take up the patent of Dr. Morton, for the Ether Discovery, has been laid upon the tables of Members of Congress, it is proper they should know that there are about 1500 physicians in the State of Massachusetts, and 300 in the city of Boston alone. The number of signers *does not equal* the number who have written voluntary letters to Washington, in Dr. Morton's behalf. *It is not* signed by a single surgeon who had charge of the Massachusetts General Hospital during the year, or for years after, Dr. Morton made his discovery and instituted his experiments in that institution. They have all testified in his favor.—See Report. It is signed by *only* 144 physicians, dentists, and all, and these are, many of them, from among the professional rivals of Dr. Morton, who originally denounced the discovery, and are not of "Boston and its vicinity," but are scattered all over the State.—See State Record.

This failure to get more than a hundred and forty-four names from 1500, after the contestants have canvassed the State for several months, only confirms what was always conceded a fixed fact, that the great body of the medical men are for Dr. Morton.

among surgeons from an early period. In my surgical lectures I have almost annually alluded to it, and stated the means which I have usually adopted for the attainment of the object. I have also freely declared that, notwithstanding the use of very large doses of narcotic substances, this desideratum had never been satisfactorily obtained. The successful use of any article of



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Brief of Points and Proofs in regard to the proposed appropriation to enable the President to procure the surrender of the Patent issued to Dr. W. T. G. Morton, for the discovery of the anæsthetic properties of sulphuric ether.

Report of the Select Committee of the House of Representatives, 32d Congress, p. 9.

It is alleged by Dr. Morton that, on the 30th day of September, 1846, he demonstrated the fact that sulphuric ether, properly administered by inhalation, would produce entire insensibility to pain under surgical operations. Now, the first question for consideration is, *was this at the time a discovery at all?* It will of course be conceded that it was, if it can be shown that mankind did not before possess a knowledge of the fact. This will now be shown by the only means possible, *i. e.*, the admissions and concessions of the most eminent men of the medical profession.

As late as 1839, the celebrated Velpeau, of France, used the following language:

"To avoid pain in surgical operations is a chimera which it is not allowable to pursue at the present day. The cutting instrument, and pain, in operative medicine, are two words which never present themselves singly to the mind of the patient, and of which we must necessarily admit the association."

Dr. J. C. Warren says:

"The discovery of a mode of preventing pain in surgical operations has been an object of strong desire among surgeons from an early period. In my surgical lectures I have almost annually alluded to it, and stated the means which I have usually adopted for the attainment of the object. I have also freely declared that, notwithstanding the use of very large doses of narcotic substances, this desideratum had never been satisfactorily obtained. The successful use of any article of

the *materia medica* for this purpose, would therefore be hailed by me as an alleviation of human suffering."

Sir Benjamin Brodie, in a discourse at St. George's Hospital, at so late a date as *October 1, 1846*, alluding to mesmerism, said :

" There is no greater desideratum, either in medicine or surgery, than to have the means of allaying or preventing bodily pain, not only in surgical operations, but in other cases also, but there is good reason to apprehend that it has not been reserved for the revival of animal magnetism under a new name, to accomplish that *for which all physicians and surgeons have been looking in vain, from the days of Hippocrates down to the present time.*"

The desideratum of which Brodie despaired on the 1st of October, 1846, had been found, and its efficacy demonstrated within the twenty-four hours preceding the delivery of his lecture. And in a few days after, the tidings were borne with the full speed of steam across the Atlantic, and dispersed over Europe and Asia, which for two thousand years had been looking for it in vain.

From the 30th of September, 1846, to the 16th of October of same year, Dr. Morton had made no public administration of ether in public, although many at his house; but on that day he administered it in the Massachusetts General Hospital, and the following is the account of the matter given by Dr. Hayward, of that Institution :

" The ether was administered at the hospital by Dr. Morton on the 16th of October, to a man upon whom Dr. Warren was to operate for a tumor on the face. The effect in this case was not complete ; the suffering, however, was very much less than it would have been under ordinary circumstances, and the result was on the whole so satisfactory that a second trial was made on the following day.



"The patient to whom the ether was administered on the 17th of October was a female with a fatty tumor on the arm, between the shoulder and the elbow. At the request of Dr. Warren I did the operation. The patient was insensible during the whole time, and was entirely unconscious. The operation lasted about seven minutes, but could not be regarded as a severe one.

"These are the first surgical operations, except those of dentistry, that were ever performed on patients while under the influence of the ether.

"On the 1st of November I took charge of the surgical department of the hospital; and on the following day, in conversation with Dr. Warren, I stated that I did not intend to allow the medical patients to inhale this preparation of Dr. Morton (for we were then ignorant of the precise nature of it) during my period of service, unless all the surgeons of the hospital were told what it was, and were satisfied of the safety of using it. Dr. Warren agreed with me as to the propriety of this course.

"On the 6th of November, Dr. Morton called at my house and asked me if I was willing to have his preparation inhaled by a patient, whose limb I was to amputate on the following day. I told him of the conversation I had had with Dr. Warren on the subject. Dr. Morton at once said that he was ready to let us know what the article was, and to give the surgeons of the hospital the right to use it there when they pleased. He added, that he would send me a letter in the course of the day to this effect. I requested him to address it to Dr. Warren, as he was the senior surgeon, and told him that I would submit it to my colleagues at a consultation to be held on the following morning. He wrote the letter accordingly; the subject was maturely considered by the surgeons, who were unani-

mously of opinion that the ether should be inhaled by the individual who was to undergo the operation that day.

"The patient was a girl of twenty years of age, named Alice Mohan, who had suffered for two years from a disease of the knee, which terminated in suppuration of the joint and caries of the bones. For some months before the operation, her constitutional symptoms had become threatening, and the removal of the limb seemed to be the only chance for her life. The ether was administered by Dr. Morton. In a little more than three minutes she was brought under the influence of it; the limb was removed, and all the vessels were tied but the last, which was the sixth, before she gave any indication of consciousness or suffering. She then groaned and cried out faintly. She afterwards said that she was wholly unconsciousness and insensible up to that time, and she seemed to be much surprised when she was told that her limb was off. She recovered rapidly, suffering less than patients usually do after amputation of the thigh, regained her strength and flesh, and was discharged well on the 22d of December."

In reference to the fact and novelty of the discovery, the following record was made at the same Hospital; and which speaks for itself:

First case of ethereal inhalation. Copied from the surgical records of the Massachusetts General Hospital.

"This case is remarkable in the annals of surgery. It was the first surgical operation performed under the influence of ether. Dr. Warren had been applied to by Dr. Morton, a dentist, with the request that he would try the inhalation of a fluid, which he said he had found to be effectual in preventing pain during operations on the teeth. Dr. Warren having satisfied himself that the breathing of the fluid would be harmless, agreed to

employ it when an opportunity presented. None occurring in private practice within a day or two, he determined to use it on this patient.

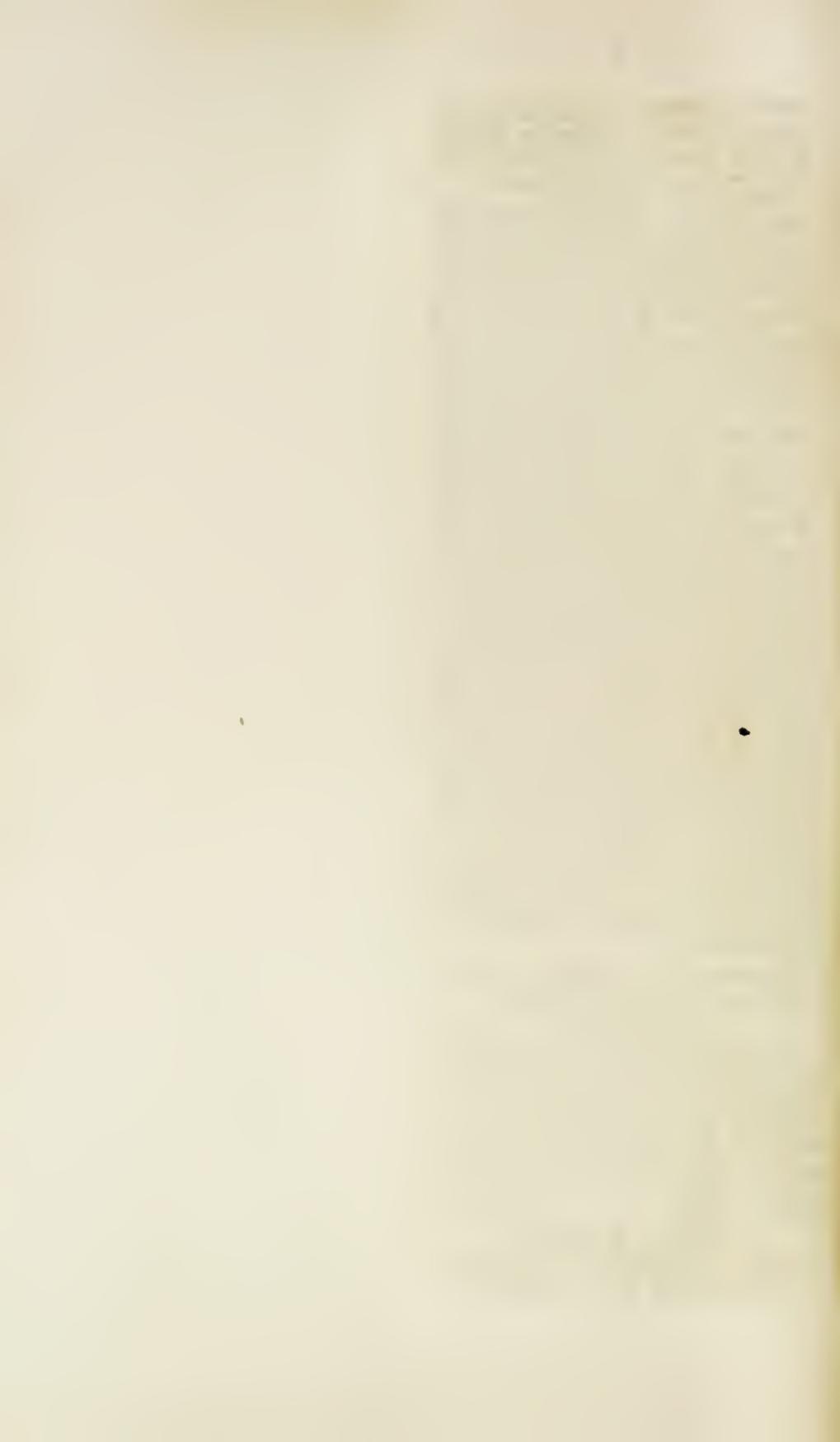
"Before the operation began some time was lost in waiting for Dr. Morton, and ultimately it was thought he would not appear. At length he arrived, and explained his detention by informing Dr. Warren that he had been occupied in preparing his apparatus, which consisted of a tube connected with a glass globe. This apparatus he then proceeded to apply, and after four or five minutes the patient appeared to be asleep, and the operation was performed as above described. To the surprise of Dr. Warren and the other gentlemen present, the patient did not shrink nor cry out; but during the insulation of the veins he began to move his limbs and utter extraordinary expressions. These movements seemed to indicate the existence of pain, but after he had recovered his faculties he said he had experienced none, but only a sensation like that of scraping the part with a blunt instrument, and he ever after continued to say he had not felt any pain. The result of this operation led to the repetition of the use of ether in other cases, and in a few days its success was established, and its use resorted to in every considerable operation in the city of Boston and its vicinity."

The following certificate is by Dr. Warren of the same Institution :

BOSTON, January 6, 1847.

"I hereby declare and certify, to the best of my knowledge and recollection, that I never heard of the use sulphuric ether by inhalation as a means of preventing the pain of surgical operations, until it was suggested by Dr. Morton in the latter part of October, 1846.

"JOHN C. WARREN,
*"Professor of Anatomy and Surgery of
 the Massachusetts General Hospital."*



In acknowledgment of not only the fact and novelty, but of the incomparable importance of the discovery, the same hospital took the steps made known in the following:

“BOSTON, May 12, 1848.

“DEAR SIR: At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital, a few weeks since, it was informally suggested, that a limited subscription of one thousand dollars shall be raised for your benefit, in acknowledgment of your services in the late ether-discovery; no one to be asked to subscribe more than ten dollars. We consented to act as a Committee to receive and apply the proceeds of this subscription. The proposed sum having been obtained, we have now the pleasure of transmitting it to you. We also enclose the subscription book in a casket which accompanies this note. Among its signatures you will find the names of not a few of those most distinguished among us for worth and intelligence; and it may be remarked, that it is signed by every member of the Board of Trustees.

“You will, we are sure, highly value this *first* testimonial, slight as it is, of the gratitude of your fellow-citizens. That you may hereafter receive an adequate national reward is the sincere wish of your obedient servants,

“SAM'L FROTHINGHAM,

“THOS. B. CURTIS.

“To Dr. WILLIAM T. G. MORTON.”

The box accompanying this note had upon it the following inscription: In front “Testimonial in honor of the Ether Discovery of Sept. 30, 1846.” And on the lid, “This box, containing one thousand dollars, is presented to William Thomas Green Morton by the members of the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital, and other citizens of Boston, May 8, 1848.”

In further acknowledgment of the fact and novelty of the discovery, the Academy of Arts and Sciences at Paris, awarded to Dr. Morton their largest gold medal.

On the one side of the medal, in addition to the name of the institute, is a madallion head of the Goddess of Liberty. On the reverse, surrounded by a wreath of laurel is engraved—

“ Académie des Sciences. Prix Montyon—Medicine et Chirurgie—Concours de 1847 et 1848. Wm. T. G. Morton, 1850.”.

In a letter written fresh on the verification of the discovery in England, the grave and sedate Liston says:

“ HURRAH !

“ Rejoice ! Mesmerism, and its professors have met with a ‘ heavy blow, and great discouragement.’ An American dentist has used ether, (inhalation of it,) to destroy sensation in his operations, and the plan has succeeded in the hands of Warren, Hayward, and others, in Boston. Yesterday, I amputated a thigh, and removed by revulsion, *both* sides of the great toe nail, without the patient’s being aware of what was doing, so far as regards pain. The amputation-man heard, he says, what we said, and was conscious, but felt neither the pain of the incisions, nor that of tying the vessels. In short, he had no sensation of pain in the operating theatre. I mean to use it to-day, in a case of stone. In six months no operation will be performed without this previous preparation. It must be carefully set about. The ether must be washed, and purified of its sulphureous acid and alcohol. Shall I desire Squire, a most capital and ingenious chemist, to send you a tool for the purpose ? It is only the bottom of Nooth’s apparatus, with a sort of funnel above, with bits of sponge, and, at the other hole, a flexible tube. Rejoice !

“ Thine always, R. L.”

Mr. Velpeau, one of the most eminent surgeons of Paris, in his treatise on medical operations in 1839, says:

"To avoid pain in surgical operations is a chimera which it is not allowable to pursue at the present day. The cutting instrument, and pain, in operative medicine, are two words which never present themselves singly to the mind of the patient, and of which we must necessarily admit the association."

But in a communication to the Academy of Arts and Sciences at Paris, on the 27th of January, 1847, he speaks thus:

"I desire that the question of priority be immediately laid aside; it does not appear, in effect, to have any foundation. To say that some one has stupefied, or put to sleep some dogs or hens, is nothing to the purpose; for this action of ether has been known fifteen, twenty, thirty years and more. The Dictionaries of Medicine, Treatises on Medical Jurisprudence—that of M. Orfila, and the toxology of the last author in particular—indicate it formally. *That which is new, is the proposition to render the patient totally insensible to pain, under a surgical operation, by means of inspirations of ether.*"

And the venerable and sage Dr. Warren in his work on etherization, speaks in the following impressive and exalted strain:

"A new era has opened to the operating surgeon! His visitations on the most delicate parts are performed, not only without the agonizing screams he has been accustomed to hear, but sometimes with a state of perfect insensibility, and occasionally even with the expression of pleasure on the part of the patient. Who could have imagined that drawing the knife over the delicate skin of the face might produce a sensation of unmixed delight! that the turning and twisting

of instruments in the most sensitive bladder might be accompanied by a beautiful dream! that the contorting of anchylosed joints should co-exist with a celestial vision! If Ambrose Paré, and Louis, and Dessault, and Chesselden, and Hunter, and Cooper, could see what our eyes daily witness, how would they long to come among us, and perform their exploits once more! And with what fresh vigor does the living surgeon, who is ready to resign the scalpel, grasp it, and wish again to go through his career under the new auspices!"

The world-renowned Orfila, in his Toxicology, declares absolute insensitivity to pain under surgical operations by etherization, to be a discovery entirely new.

After such names and authorities have pronounced this to have been a new discovery, it is apprehended that but few will deny it; and that few, such only as may be ranked as presumptuous pedants, or envious quacks. Add to all that has been given, the fact, that two select committees of the House of Representatives, raised at successive Congresses for the purpose of investigating the matter, have decided in favor of the fact and novelty of the discovery, with the witnesses, depositions, and other proofs before them; and that one standing committee of the House and two of the Senate naval and military have approved and sanctioned that decision, and it would seem that no sensible, honest, or scientific mind could entertain a doubt of the fact or the novelty of the discovery. If, then, these truths have been established, the next question to be answered is—*who made the discovery?*

That Dr. Wm. T. G. Morton made the discovery, can be demonstrated by proof of a more positive character,

though some of the proofs are the same before quoted and referred to. To begin with these :

First, is the concurrent awards of the Academy of Arts and Sciences of Paris, and of the Massachusetts General Hospital, in his favor ?

Second, is the concurrent decisions of five committees of Congress in his favor, two of them select committees, deciding after hearing full proofs, and the arguments of counsel ?

Third, is the report "of the first case of ethereal inhalation" previously copied from the surgical records of the Massachusetts General Hospital ?

And, fourth, is the acknowledgment of Dr. Morton as the discoverer, in the present of \$1,000 and the Casket, by the trustees of that Hospital.

The only contestants of Dr. Morton's right to the discovery, who have ever appeared, are Dr. H. Wells, and Dr. Chas. T. Jackson. Now if it can be shown that the claims of both these gentlemen are unfounded, and this, too, by proof from their own lips and pens, then the right of Dr. Morton stands uncontradicted and free from suspicion.

The claim of Dr. Wells is effectually disposed of by the following correspondence, which occurred after Dr. Morton had tested and proved his discovery, both in his private practice and in the hospital :

"*BOSTON, October 19, 1846.*

"**FRIEND WELLS—Dear Sir:** I write to inform you that I have discovered a preparation, by inhaling which, a person is thrown into sound sleep. The time required to produce sleep is only a few moments, and the time in which persons remain asleep can be regulated at pleasure. While in this state the severest surgical or dental operations may be performed, the patient not experiencing the slightest pain. I have perfected it, and am now about sending out agents to dis-

pose of the right to use it. I will dispose of a right to an individual to use it in his own practice alone, or for a town, county, or State. My object in writing you is to know if you would not like to visit New York and the other cities, and dispose of rights upon shares. I have used the compound in more than one hundred and sixty cases in extracting teeth, and I have been invited to administer to patients in the Massachusetts General Hospital, and have succeeded in every case.

"The Professors, Warren and Hayward, have given me written certificates to this effect. I have administered it at the Hospital in the presence of the students and physicians—the room for operations being as full as possible. For further particulars I will refer you to extracts from the daily journals of this city, which I forward to you.

Respectfully yours,
"WM. T. G. MORTON."

"HARTFORD, CONN., Oct. 20, 1846.

"DR. MORTON—*Dear Sir*: Your letter dated yesterday, is just received, and I hasten to answer it, for fear you will adopt a method in disposing of your rights, which will defeat your object. Before you make any arrangements whatever, I wish to see you. I think I will be in Boston the first of next week—probably Monday night. If the operation of administering the gas is not attended with too much trouble, and will produce the effect you state, it will, undoubtedly, be a fortune to you, provided it is rightly managed.

"Yours, in haste,
"H. WELLS."

"BOSTON, Feb. 17th, 1847.

"R. H. DANA, Esq.—*Dear Sir*: In reply to your note of this morning, I have to state that about the time I was engaged in preparing the papers for the proclal of the patent, in the United States, on the discovery of Dr. Morton, for preventing pain in surgical operations, by the inhalation of the

vapor of sulphuric ether, I was requested by Dr. Morton to call at his office to have an interview with the late Dr. Horace Wells, who was then on a visit to this city, and who, Dr. Morton thought, might be able to render him valuable advice and assistance in regard to the mode of disposing of privileges to use the discovery. Accordingly I had an interview with Dr. Wells. During such meeting we conversed freely on the discovery and in relation to the experiments Dr. Wells had been witness to in the office of Dr. Morton. The details of our conversation I do not recollect sufficiently to attempt to relate them, but the whole of it, and the manner of Dr. Wells at the time, led me, in no respect, to any suspicion that he (Dr. Wells) had ever before been aware of the then discovered effect of ether in annulling pain during a surgical operation.

"I must confess that when, some time afterwards, I heard of the pretensions of Dr. Wells to be considered the discoverer of the aforementioned effect of ether, I was struck with great surprise, for his whole conversation with me at the time of our interview, led me to the belief that he fully and entirely recognized the discovery to have been made by Dr. Morton, or at least partly by him and partly by Dr. C. T. Jackson, as I then supposed.

"Respectfully yours,
R. H. EDDY."

From this it is plainly seen that Dr. Wells conceded the discovery to Dr. Morton.

As to Dr. Jackson, it was in sworn proof, before the select committee of the House, that, on the 23d day of October, 1846, 24 days after the discovery was made, Dr. Jackson not only denied that he had known the effects of ether on the 30th of September, but also denied that *Dr. Morton* had made the discovery claimed.

This sworn proof is set forth in the following extract from the report of the select committee of the House, page 27:

"But Dr. Jackson's conversation with Mr. Caleb Eddy on the 23d of October, 1846, and with the Hon Edward Warren, is in the opinion of your committee conclusive upon this subject. On the evening of that day Dr. Jackson visited Mr. Eddy, and gave an account of his conversation between him and Dr. Morton of September 30, which the witness having detailed, says: '*After Dr. Jackson had related the above, I said to him, 'Dr. Jackson, did you know at such time, that after a person had inhaled ether and was asleep, his flesh could be cut with a knife without his experiencing any pain?'*' He replied, '*No, nor Morton either; he is a reckless man for using it as he has; the chance is, he will kill somebody yet.'*' And the Hon. E. Warren, in his letter, says: '*Dr. Jackson told me, in substance, that the so-called discovery was not his, but that Dr. Morton was responsible for it; that the new use of ether was dangerous, and would, he feared, be attended with fatal consequences, that he (Dr. Jackson) was not answerable for the results, and that, therefore, he would refer me to Dr. Morton for further information.'*'"

The time here spoken of by Dr. Jackson is the 30th of September. He admits that on that day he *did not* know that the inhalation of ether would produce insensibility to pain in the flesh when cut with a knife; and yet Dr. Hayden proves that Dr. Morton *did* know it. He says:

"The first successful experiment upon any patient was made September 30, 1846, by inhaling ether through a folded cloth, and on that occasion a tooth was extracted without pain."

Further on he says:

"And I will here state that, on the

evening of the 30th of September, after the first experiment had been made with success, Dr. Morton spoke about going to the hospital and using the ether there, and thus bring out the new discovery. After several other successful experiments, the question came up anew, how to introduce it to the world, when Dr. M. stated that Dr. Jackson had declined to countenance it, or aid in bringing out, and then he (Dr. M.) said he would see Dr. Warren, and have his discovery introduced into the Massachusetts General Hospital. He went out and soon returned, stating that Dr. W. had agreed to afford him an opportunity to apply the vapor, as soon as practicable, in the hospital."

The following is an account given by Dr. Hayward, a short time after, of the first introduction of the vapor of ether into the Massachusetts General Hospital—

"The ether was administered at the hospital by Dr. Morton on the 16th of October, to a man upon whom Dr. Warren was to operate for a tumor on the face. The effect in this case was not complete; the suffering, however, was very much less than it would have been under ordinary circumstances, and the result was on the whole so satisfactory that a second trial was made on the following day.

"The patient to whom the ether was administered on the 17th of October was a female with a fatty tumor on the arm, between the shoulder and the elbow. At the request of Dr. Warren I did the operation. The patient was insensible during the whole time, and was entirely unconscious. The operation lasted about seven minutes, but could not be regarded as a severe one.

"These are the first surgical operations, except those of dentistry, that were ever performed on patients while under the influence of the ether.

From the 16th of October, 1846, to the 2d of January, 1847, the use of ether was continued in the hospital almost daily; but in no instance did Dr. Jackson make his appearance, as will appear from the following testimony of Dr. S. D. Townsend, one of the surgeons of the hospital—page 34:

"Dr. Jackson presented himself for the first time on the 2d of January, 1847, and brought with him a bag of oxygen gas as an antidote to asphyxia. I have had this date always fixed in my mind by the fact that I performed an amputation on that day under the influence of ether, and this is also confirmed by the records of the hospital."

Not only was this the first appearance of Dr. Jackson at the hospital, but prior to this we have seen that he denounced both the use of ether and Dr. Morton, and prophesied that he would "*kill somebody yet.*"

Dr. Henry J. Bigelow, Professor of Harvard University, and surgeon in the Massachusetts General Hospital, in a letter to Hon. Geo. T. Davis, says, p. 66:

"In reply to your inquiry how far Dr. Jackson personally superintended the early administration of ether at the Hospital, I answer, *not at all*. He not only exercised no superintendence at the Hospital, assumed no responsibility, but actually did not come there for more than two months after ether was regularly in use in that institution:

Dr. Morton instituted the experiments; he had their sole control; he took the responsibility of them, while Dr. Jackson kept out of the way.

And, again; he says in the same letter:

"One thing is very striking: Dr. Jackson never saw a single surgical or dental operation with ether until long after it was a confirmed discovery."

In view of all these facts, and on the spot where they transpired, the Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital, at their meeting in January, 1848, came to the following conclusion, which they reviewed at the request of Dr. Jackson, in 1849, and confirmed :

"2d. That Dr. Jackson does not appear at any time to have made any discovery, in regard to ether, which was not in print in Great Britain some years before.

"3d. That Dr. Morton in 1846, discovered the facts before unknown, that ether would prevent the pain of surgical operations; and that it might be given in sufficient quantity to effect this purpose, without danger to life. He first established these facts by numerous operations on teeth, and afterwards induced the surgeons of the hospital to demonstrate its general applicability and importance in capital operations."

Can any one longer doubt that Dr. Morton was the *real and only discoverer* of the great pain-destroying properties of ether? If not, the next question is, *What reward should he receive from his country for the discovery?*

This should be determined by the sacrifices of the discoverer, and the value of the discovery to the country and mankind.

On the subject of Dr. Morton's sacrifices, the special committee of the House, say:

"By these operations, performed in a public hospital before professional men of the highest intelligence, and the perfect success of the ethereal vapor in annihilating all pain, its evident safety, and the readiness of recovery from the anaesthetic state, which resembled the waking from a deep and quiet sleep, a profound impression was made upon the public mind. In that of the surgical faculty it rose to enthusiasm. The success of the discovery was established; Boston, its native city, was proud of

its maternity, and it was about to be hailed in Europe, whither a power swifter than the winds was wafting it, with wonder and applause.

"During all this time Dr. Morton alone claimed the discovery and conducted the experiments. He had staked every thing dear in life, his hopes of fortune and fame, upon the discovery. He gave his labor by day and his thoughts by night to the perfecting of all that was incomplete in its application; and in the language of the report of the Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital, "it is a mortifying fact that Dr. Morton's pecuniary affairs have become embarrassed in consequence of the interruption of his regular business, resulting from his efforts and experiments in establishing this great truth, and that his health has also severely suffered from the same cause, so that he can devote only a small part of each day to his professional labors. He became poor in a cause which has made the world his debtor. The committee have the highest medical authority (that of Dr. Homans) for saying that from living so much of late in an atmosphere of ether, and from the anxiety attending the various trials and experiments connected with the discovery, and from the excitement caused by the controversies which it has occasioned, the health of Dr. Morton has become such that he is unable to attend to his professional duties to any extent.' And it was not until all was complete and completely verified, not until some time after the operation of the 2d of January, 1847, did any rival appear and publicly claim the discovery, or even a participation in it."

Several witnesses, page 96, also testify to his having spent a large amount of money to bring out the discovery, and put down opposition.

This is the committee's account of the physical and pecuniary sacrifice of Dr. Morton; but this is not all. The committee further says:

On the 20th November, 1847, the physicians and surgeons of the hospital (with one exception) prepared a memorial to Congress, setting forth the importance of this discovery, and praying the Government to make a payment "to those persons who shall be found, on investigation, to merit compensation," on condition that the patent be given up. Knowing that this would result in an official inquiry into the discovery, Dr. Morton promoted it to the utmost of his power. Dr. Jackson, on the other hand, remonstrated against it, on the professed ground that he would submit his claims to no tribunal, and that, as the sole discoverer, he wished no reward beyond the gratitude of mankind.

It is well known that an effort was made in London, by subscription, for a donation to the discoverer of the effects of ether. By letters to gentlemen in this country from friends in London, we are informed that a sum, estimated at £10,000, was considered as secured. *But the controversy and doubt created by Dr. Jackson's communications to the French Academy caused it to be abandoned.*

The sacrifices of Dr. Morton, in point of feeling, cannot be estimated; but it could easily be shown that no other devotee to science, in modern times, has suffered an equal amount of traduction, villification, and persecution, and all from Dr. Jackson and his emissaries.

Of the value of the discovery to the country and mankind, high functionaries of the Government have already spoken, and their testimony will now be given:

"SURGEON GENERAL'S OFFICE,
March 1, 1852.

"Sir: In compliance with your verbal request to be furnished with information in regard to the employment of anæsthetic agents in the army of the United States, and also for an

expression of opinion as to the value and importance of this class of remedial agents, I have to state :

"That sulphuric ether and chloroform were used to some extent in the military hospitals established at the theatre of war in Mexico, but the use of those articles was not so general as at present, for the reason that the apparatus at that time believed to be essential to their proper and safe administration, was not adapted to service in the field.

"At the present moment it is believed that no surgical operation of importance is performed by the medical officers of the army without the aid of some anæsthetic agent.

"Previous to the discovery of this new application of sulphuric ether, the annual supply of that medicine was one pound for every hundred men. On the revision of the standard supply table, by a board of medical officers, in 1849, the pure washed sulphuric ether, was substituted for the ordinary sulphuric ether, and the quantity allowed was increased one hundred per cent. At the same time another anæsthetic agent, the tincture of chloroform, commonly called chloric ether, was added to the supply table, and is now regularly furnished to the medical officers in such quantities as, in connexion with the sulphuric ether, will suffice to meet all the demands of the service in this particular.

"Although the discovery of this new therapeutic effect of sulphuric ether has led to the introduction and employment of other anæsthetic agents this does not in any way militate against the merits of the original discovery, which I regard as one of the most important and valuable contributions to medical science, and to the relief of suffering humanity, which has ever been made, the only discovery to be compared therewith being that of vaccination, which has rendered the name of Jenner immortal.

"Through the influence of these remedial agents, the surgeon is not only enabled to perform the most extensive and difficult operations, undisturbed by the cries and struggles of the patient, but what is of far greater importance, the patient being rendered insensible, escapes that shock to the nervous system, which in itself is not unfrequently fatal. For this reason operations can now be performed with much more safety than heretofore, and that, too, in cases in which the attempt to perform them would have been forbidden by the general condition of the patient.

"To the physician this class of remedial agents promises to be of the greatest utility, though their application in the treatment of disease has yet to be more fully developed.

"It will suffice at this time to allude to their employment for the relief of suffering woman in the hour of her greatest trial, and at the moment she claims our warmest sympathies. That these agents can be safely used in parturition, so as to afford full and entire exemption from pain to the mother, and with safety both to her and to the child, has been amply demonstrated.

"In conclusion, permit me to congratulate you upon the flattering testimonial you have received from the National Institute of France, for this discovery, and to express the hope, that inasmuch as it is impossible for you to derive any pecuniary benefit therefrom in ordinary course by letters patent, you may receive from your country that acknowledgment of your merit, which is due to one who has conferred so great a boon upon mankind.

"I am, very respectfully,

"Your obedient servant,

"TH. LAWSON,

"Surgeon General.

"W. T. G. MORTON, M. D.,
"Brown's Hotel, Washington, D. C."

The Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, concludes a letter of Feb. 26, 1852, as follows:

"It is earnestly hoped that our Government, with a similar appreciation of this great acquisition to medical science, will stamp their sense of its importance, by a substantial acknowledgment which, while it encourages the philanthropist in his efforts to meliorate the condition of his fellow men, will remunerate you in some measure for the toil and vexation attendant on your struggles for success.

"Respectfully your ob't serv't,

"THO. HARRIS,

"Chief Bureau of Med. and Surg'y.

"Wm. T. G. MORTON, M. D.,

"Washington, D. C."

The Hon. Secretary of the Treasury, who has the U. S. Marine Hospitals under his charge, concludes a letter of June 25, 1852, as follows:

"I therefore recommend that such reasonable and liberal sum, as the committee of which you are chairman may in their discretion determine upon, be reported as a *national compensation* to Dr. Morton, and that the same be attached, as proposed by Col. Bissell, to the "naval appropriation bill" for the ensuing fiscal year.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"THO. CORWIN,

"Secretary of the Treasury.

"Hon. FREDERICK P. STANTON,

"Chairman Naval Committee

House of Representatives."

The Hon. Secretary of War, in his letter of June 21, 1852, uses this language :

"Judging from this information, there can be but little doubt that this discovery is one of the most valuable contributions that science has ever made to the cause of humanity.

"I do not know what the practice of the Government has been in regard

to rewarding individuals for inventions or discoveries made by them, or, at least, compensating them for the use of them in the public service, [see page 81, 89, and 97,] but I do not hesitate to say that if it has been the practice of Congress to grant such rewards or compensation, Dr. Morton's claim is fairly entitled to the most liberal consideration.

"Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"C. M. CONRAD,
"Secretary of War.

"Hon. FREDERICK P. STANTON,

"Chairman Committee on
Naval Affairs, House of Reps."

The Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, concludes a letter of 29th June, 1852, as follows:

"It will be difficult to estimate the amount which the inventor may reasonably ask of the Government in consideration of the advantages attending its use in the two services. For the reasons above mentioned, the cost of the ether itself cannot enter as an element into the calculation, and the fairest estimate, I conceive, might be more nearly approximated by the amount one would be willing to give to be rescued from impending death, or to be relieved from urgent and intolerable pain.

I would express the opinion, however, that the sum of *one hundred thousand dollars* proposed by the Select Committee of the House of Representatives as a compensation to the inventor, is nothing more than a fair equivalent for the immense advantage resulting to the Government and country from this important discovery.

"I am, very respectfully,

"Your obedient servant,

"THOS. HARRIS,

"Chief Bureau Med. and Surg'y.
"Hon. Wm. A. GRAHAM, Sec'y Navy."

In addition to the above testimonials, there has been received by Dr. Bissell, Chairman of the Select Committee, letters from a large portion of the surgeons of the army and the navy, and several hundred from the most prominent members of the medical profession, bearing testimony to the wonderful efficacy of this new agent, and many of them recommending that Dr. Morton, the discoverer, should be liberally rewarded. Some of which may be found in the appendix to the report, page 100 to 111.



Accession no.

7299

Author

U.S. 32d Congress

Brief of points ..
sulphuric ether.

Call no.

ANESTHESIA
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